

## **ACT OF JUNE 14, 1926-(Recreation and Public Purposes)**

[Commonly Known as the Recreation and Public Purposes Act]

[As Amended Through P.L. 117–328, Enacted December 29, 2022]

【Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of chapter 578 of the 69th Congress. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/>】

【Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).】

**CHAP. 578.**—An Act To authorize acquisition or use of public lands by States, counties, or municipalities for recreational purposes.

**SECTION 1. [43 U.S.C. 869]** (a) The Secretary of the Interior upon application filed by a duly qualified applicant under section 2 of this Act may, in the manner prescribed by this Act, dispose of any public lands to a State, federally recognized Indian Tribe, Territory, county, municipality, or other State, Tribal, Territorial, or Federal instrumentality or political subdivision for any public purposes, or to a nonprofit corporation or nonprofit association for any recreational or any public purpose consistent with its articles of incorporation or other creating authority. Before the land may be disposed of under this Act it must be shown to the satisfaction of the Secretary that the land is to be used for an established or definitely proposed project, that the land involved is not of national significance nor more than is reasonably necessary for the proposed use, and that for proposals of over 640 acres comprehensive land use plans and zoning regulations applicable to the area in which the public lands to be disposed of are located have been adopted by the appropriate State, Tribal, or local authority. The Secretary shall provide an opportunity for participation by affected citizens in disposals under this Act, including public hearings or meetings where he deems it appropriate to provide public comments, and shall hold at least one public meeting on any proposed disposal of more than six hundred forty acres under this Act. The Secretary may classify public lands in Alaska for disposition under this Act. Lands so classified may not be appropriated under any other public land law unless the Secretary revises such classification or authorizes the disposition of an interest in the lands under other applicable law. If, within eighteen months following such classification, no application has been filed for the purpose for which the lands have been so classified, then the Secretary shall restore such lands to appropriation under the applicable public land laws.

(b) Conveyances made in any one calendar year shall be limited as follows:

(1) For recreational purposes:

(A) To any State or the State park agency or any other agency having jurisdiction over the State park system of such State designated by the Governor of that State as its sole representative for acceptance of lands under this provision, hereinafter referred to as the State, or to any political subdivision of such State, six thousand four hundred acres, and such additional acreage as may be needed for small roadside parks and rest sites of not more than ten acres each.

(B) To any nonprofit corporation or nonprofit association, six hundred and forty acres.

(C) No more than twenty-five thousand six hundred acres may be conveyed for recreational purposes under this Act in any one State per calendar year. Should any State or political subdivision, however, fail to secure, in any one year, six thousand four hundred acres, not counting lands for small roadside parks and rest sites, conveyances may be made thereafter if pursuant to an application on file with the Secretary of the Interior on or before the last day of said year and to the extent that the conveyance would not have exceeded the limitations of said year.

(D) To any federally recognized Indian Tribe, 6,400 acres.

(2) For public purposes other than recreation:

(A) To any State or agency or instrumentality thereof, for any one program, six hundred and forty acres.

(B) To any political subdivision of a State, six hundred and forty acres.

(C) To any nonprofit corporation or nonprofit association, six hundred and forty acres.

(D) To any federally recognized Indian Tribe, 640 acres.

(c) Where the lands have been withdrawn in aid of a function of a Federal department or agency other than the Department of the Interior, or of a State, Territory, county, municipality, water district, or other local governmental subdivision or agency, the Secretary of the Interior may make disposals under this Act only with the consent of such Federal department or agency, or of such State, Territory, or local governmental unit. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to apply to lands in any national forest, national park, or national monument, or national wildlife refuge, or to any Indian lands or lands set aside or held for the use or benefit of Indians, including lands over which jurisdiction has been transferred to the Department of the Interior by Executive order for the use of Indians, or, except insofar as this Act applies to leases of land to States, federally recognized Indian Tribes, and counties and to State, Tribal, Territorial, and Federal instrumentalities and political subdivisions and to municipal corporations, to the reconstituted Oregon and California Railroad grant lands and the reconveyed Coos Bay Wagon Road grant lands in the State of Oregon. Nor shall any

disposition be made under this Act for any use authorized under any other law.

SEC. 2. [43 U.S.C. 869–1] The Secretary of the Interior may after due consideration as to the power value of the land, whether or not withdrawn therefor, (a) sell such land to the State, federally recognized Indian Tribe, Territory, county, or other State, Tribal, Territorial, or Federal instrumentality or political subdivision in which the lands are situated, or to a nearby federally recognized Indian Tribe or municipal corporation in the same State or Territory, for the purpose for which the land has been classified, and conveyances of such land for historic-monument purposes or recreational purposes under this subsection shall be made without monetary consideration, while conveyances for any other purpose under this subsection shall be made at a price to be fixed by the Secretary of the Interior through appraisal or otherwise, after taking into consideration the purpose for which the lands are to be used; (b) lease such land to the State, federally recognized Indian Tribe, Territory, county, or other State, Tribal, Territorial, or Federal instrumentality or political subdivision in which the lands are situated, or to a nearby federally recognized Indian Tribe or municipal corporation in the same State or Territory, for the purpose for which the land has been classified, at a reasonable annual rental, except that leases of such lands for recreational purposes shall be made without monetary consideration, for a period up to twenty-five years, and, at the discretion of the Secretary, with a privilege of renewal for a like period, (c) sell such land to a nonprofit corporation or nonprofit association, for the purpose for which the land has been classified, at a price to be fixed by the Secretary of the Interior through appraisal, after taking into consideration the purpose for which the lands are to be used, or (d) lease such land to a nonprofit corporation or nonprofit association at a reasonable annual rental, for a period up to twenty years, and, at the discretion of the Secretary, with a privilege of renewal for a like period. Each patent or lease so issued shall contain a reservation to the United States of all mineral deposits in the lands conveyed or leased and of the right to mine and remove the same, under applicable laws and regulations to be established by the Secretary. Each lease shall contain a provision for its termination upon a finding by the Secretary that the land has not been used by the lessee for the purpose specified in the lease for such period, not over five years, as may be specified in the lease, or that such land or any part thereof is being devoted to another use.

SEC. 3. [43 U.S.C. 869–2] (a) Title to lands conveyed by the Government under this Act may not be transferred by the grantee or its successor except, with the consent of the Secretary of the Interior, to a transferee which would be a qualified grantee under section 2 (a) or (c) and subject to the acreage limitation contained in section 1 (b) of this Act. A grantee or its successor may not change the use specified in the conveyance to another or additional use except, with the consent of the Secretary, to a use for which such grantee or its successor could obtain a conveyance under this Act. If at any time after the lands are conveyed by the Government, the grantee or its successor attempts to transfer title to or control over these lands to another or the lands are devoted to a

use other than that for which the lands were conveyed, without the consent of the Secretary, title to the lands shall revert to the United States.

(b) NEW DISPOSAL SITES.—(1) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a) of this section, if the Secretary receives an application for conveyance of land under this Act for the express purpose of solid waste disposal or for another purpose which the Secretary finds may include the disposal, placement, or release of any hazardous substance, the Secretary may convey such land subject only to the provisions of this subsection.

(2) Prior to issuance of any conveyance of land under this subsection the Secretary shall investigate the land covered by an application for such conveyance to determine whether or not any hazardous substance is present on such land. Such investigation shall include a review of any available records as to the use of such land and all appropriate analysis of the soil, water and air associated with such land. No land shall be conveyed under this subsection if such investigation indicates that any hazardous substance is present on such land.

(3) No application for conveyance under this subsection shall be acted on by the Secretary until the applicant has furnished evidence, satisfactory to the Secretary, that a copy of the application and information concerning the proposed use of the land covered by the application has been provided to the Environmental Protection Agency and to all other State and Federal agencies with responsibility for enforcement of State and Federal laws applicable to lands used for the disposal, placement, or release of solid waste or any hazardous substance.

(4) No application for conveyance under this subsection shall be acted on by the Secretary until the applicant has given a warranty that use of the land covered by the application will be consistent with all applicable State and Federal laws, including laws dealing with the disposal, placement, or release of hazardous substances, and that the applicant will hold the United States harmless from any liability that may arise out of any violation of any such law.

(5) A conveyance under this subsection shall be made to the extent that the applicant has demonstrated to the Secretary that the land covered by an application meets all applicable State and local requirements and is appropriate in character and reasonable in acreage in order to meet an existing or reasonably anticipated need for solid waste disposal or for another proposed use that the Secretary finds may include the disposal, placement, or release of any hazardous substance.

(6) A conveyance under this subsection shall be subject to the following conditions:

(A) Except as otherwise provided in subparagraphs (B) and (D) of this paragraph, the document of conveyance shall provide that the lands conveyed under this subsection shall revert to the United States, unless substantially all of the lands have been used, on or before the date five years after the date of conveyance, for the purpose or purposes specified in the application, or for other use or uses authorized under section 3(a) with the consent of the Secretary.

(B) In the event that at any time after such conveyance any portion of such lands has not been used for the purpose or purposes specified in the application, and the party to whom such lands were conveyed by the Secretary shall transfer ownership of such unused portion to any other party, the party to whom such lands were conveyed by the Secretary shall be liable to pay the Secretary, on behalf of the United States, the fair market value of such transferred portion as of the date of such transfer, including the value of any improvements thereon. Subject to appropriations, all amounts received by the Secretary under this subparagraph shall be retained by the Secretary and used for the management of public lands and shall remain available until expended.

(C) Pricing for conveyances of land under this subsection shall be in accordance with the provisions of section 2 of this Act, except that no compensation shall be required for the inclusion of only the limited reverter specified in this paragraph.

(D) Each patent issued under this subsection shall specify that no portion of the lands covered by such patent shall under any circumstances revert to the United States if such portion has been used for solid waste disposal or for any other purpose that the Secretary finds may result in the disposal, placement, or release of any hazardous substance.

(7) For purposes of this section the term “hazardous substance” has the same meaning as such term has when used in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (42 U.S.C. 9601 et seq.).

(c) EXISTING DISPOSAL SITES.—(1) Upon the application or with the concurrence of any party to whom the Secretary, prior to the date of enactment of this subsection, conveyed land under this Act, the Secretary may renounce the reversionary interests of the United States in such land, or portion thereof, if the Secretary finds that such land, or portion thereof, has been used for solid waste disposal or for any other purpose which the Secretary finds may result in the disposal, placement, or release of any hazardous substance, and the Secretary may rescind any portion of any patent or other instrument of conveyance inconsistent with such renunciation. After such renunciation, affected lands shall not under any circumstances revert to the United States by the operation of law, and shall cease to be subject to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section.

(2) Upon the application or with the concurrence of a party to whom the Secretary, prior to the date of enactment of this subsection, leased lands pursuant to this Act, the Secretary may convey in fee the lands covered by such lease or any portion thereof which have been used for solid waste disposal or for any other purpose that the Secretary finds may result in the disposal, placement, or release of any hazardous substance. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Act, a patent issued pursuant to this paragraph shall not contain a reverter provision and the lands covered by such patent shall not under any circumstances revert to the United States by operation of law after the issuance of such patent and shall not be subject to the provisions of subsection (a) of this section.

SEC. 4. [43 U.S.C. 869–3] The Secretary may authorize transfers of title or changes in use in accordance with the provisions of section 3 of this Act with respect to any patent heretofore issued under any Act upon application by a patentee qualified to obtain a conveyance under section 2 (a) or (c) of this Act. If the Secretary, pursuant to such an application, authorizes such transfer or use, all reverter provisions and other limitations on transfer or use, under this or any other Act affecting the lands involved, shall cease to be in effect twenty-five years after the Secretary authorizes the transfer or use for a changed or additional purpose under the provisions of this section.

SEC. 5. [Omitted-Amendments]

SEC. 6. [43 U.S.C. 869–4] All moneys received from or on account of any revested Oregon and California Railroad grant lands or reconveyed Coos Bay Wagon Road grant lands under this Act shall be deposited respectively in the Oregon and California land-grant fund and the Coos Bay Wagon Road grant fund, and shall be applied in the manner prescribed respectively by title II of the Act of August 28, 1937 (50 Stat. 875), as amended (43 U.S.C. 1181f), and by the Act of May 24, 1939 (53 Stat. 753).